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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 001528

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV FR RU

SUBJECT: MFA SAYS FRANCE-GERMANY-RUSSIA-SPAIN MARCH 18
MEETING IS "FOLLOW UP" TO SOCHI

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, FOR REAS
ONS 1.4 B/D

¶11. (C) During a March 8 meeting with Jean-Francois Terral, the MFA's A/S-equivalent for Russia, the former Soviet space and the Balkans, POL M/C raised news of a March 18 meeting in Paris of the French, German, Russian and Spanish leaders. Terral said the meeting should be viewed in the context of the September 2004 Chirac-Schroeder-Putin meeting in Sochi, where leaders of the three countries decided to continue meeting in such a format. When asked why Spain was then included, Terral said he had no idea, and speculated that President Chirac and Chancellor Schroeder had decided "it was a good idea." Terral said the March 18 meeting would be very informal and that he did not expect the MFA to receive substantive readouts.

¶12. (C) Terral said he understood USG uneasiness regarding the meeting given the history leading up to the Iraq conflict, but told POL M/C that "the U.S. shouldn't worry." He said his office had been tasked to draw up papers on the Balkans, especially Kosovo and EU-Russian relations, and he assumed other international issues, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and the Middle East peace process, would be discussed. Terral believed that EU-Russian relations would be discussed in the context of the upcoming EU-Russia meeting in early May. It was important to have essentially concluded negotiations on the "four spaces" of common EU-Russia cooperation before the May meeting, Terral said.

Leach